

May 12, 1975

SENATOR NICHOL: Mr. Chairman, members of the Legislature, as one who started this program at a lower level than the state Legislature, I rise to support the Cavanaugh amendment. All of us know, including this Legislature, as well as all county commissioners that this is probably the most expensive type of education that we have and this Legislature knew full well when we started into it that it was going to be very expensive student wise, per capita. We went on it. We asked the counties to go along with us, which they did and which they are still doing. As was pointed out before, these are programs that are in gear. Nothing new is being added. However, we have assumed these people into our program in the various counties across the state and they are in these programs now but because of changes in regulations, they will be dealt out. I support the amendment because I think it's our obligation and our duty to do it. Now if you look at the figures that are being appropriated to the various districts, my own district gets practically none but looking at Omaha's, we have 504,000 which is a little over a half million bucks and almost 100,000 for the Lincoln area, and these people, whether they are retarded in my area or the higher populated areas, still need the funding that this amendment will provide. I urge you to support this amendment. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Senator Dickinson.

SENATOR DICKINSON: Mr. President, members of the body, would Senator Cavanaugh yield to a question or two? You mention mental retardation and so have the others, is this the total area we are talking about? Are we talking about mental health in general.

SENATOR CAVANAUGH: No, we are talking exclusively mental retardation, Senator.

SENATOR DICKINSON: Are there other amendments proposing more funds for the other areas of mental health?

SENATOR CAVANAUGH: Well, Senator Goodrich had one the other day that was defeated.

SENATOR DICKINSON: Somebody is getting their lobbying efforts twisted and their sources, channels they choose to use to get at their state Senator.

SENATOR CAVANAUGH: I am lobbying for the retarded, only, Senator.

SENATOR DICKINSON: You mentioned eligibility, Senator Cavanaugh, administrative changes in eligibility. Would you please explain this a little bit. Who makes these changes?

SENATOR CAVANAUGH: Well, the Welfare Department sets the eligibility criteria for the children, income level of parents and when they fluctuate those they refuse to make payments for children in the program whose parents may not meet the new eligibility standards. The problem is that they do it in mid-fiscal year which means there is no way that the regions or the program providers can budget for administrative changes that are made by the State Welfare Department in mid-budget year and, as a